the factors causing problems. I am not suggesting to get rid of them. But in the context of 4 billion tonnes of coking coal reserve identified by the Central Mining and Planning Institute, what are the plans now made to make use of this coal, reduce the imports and use effectively the surplus labour and machinery ?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA : So far as the surplus labour, the workforce which is becoming surplus, is concerned, just because of exhaustion of a particular mine not a single labour was kept idle. What CIL are doing is that they open new mines so that the surplus workmen are taken to the new mines. So far as the import of coal is concerned, we have made a calculation. We will be going in for better wrades of coal from good mines, particularly Jharia and others, and we are optimally utilising our machineries, installing pit-head handling plants, weigh bridges, etc. In fact, it is one of the factors—utilising them for two years consecutively—which enable CIL to make profit. By March 1994 they will be able to cover 80 per cent of the area by utilising coal-head handling plants, modern equipment and weighing machines resulting in better performance and better quality of coal. Therefore, by mining better grade coal as well as by improving existing infrastructure we will be able to give quality coal and reduce import. That is the assurance given to the Government by the Coal India Limited.

Increase in Prices of Tea

*368. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA†

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to increase the prices of leaf tea; and

†The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Satya Prakash Malviya.

(b) if so, the decision taken by Government in this regard, stating its likely impact on the domestic consumers and on the export of Indian Tea ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) The prices of tea are not fixed by the Government.

(b) Does not arise.

श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय : सभापति जी, क्या मंत्री जी रोह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि अभी हाल में जो बजट प्रस्तुत किया गया है, इसके बाद से खुले बाजार में या सरकार की जो कन्जूमर्स सोसायटीज हैं, वहां चाय की पत्ती के दाम बढ़ गए हैं ?

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED : Sir, as far as the post-Budget scenario is concerned, I don't know.

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA : I am furnishing the information. Kindly check it up.

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERPEE) : You will not get the reply as the time is going to be up. Let me reply to the question. This year production has gone down as compared to the last year. There would be a question of demand and supply position in the market. In fact, this year it has been 38 million kilograms less as compared to the previous year. In the previous year it was 742 million kilograms. This year it is 704 million kilograms. As far as the Government is concerned, we cannot control the prices of tea, either of tea leaf or of tea bags. Normally it has been determined by the market forces through various auction centres and to an extent the demand and supply has some relevance to this. At this stage this is the information that I can give to the hon. Member.

श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय : माननीय सभापति जी, मेरा दूसरा प्रश्न यह है कि जिस तरह से गरीबों को सस्ता गेहूं उपलब्ध कराया जाता है, उसी तरह से क्या गरीबों को सस्ती चाय उपलब्ध कराने की सरकार की योजना है ?

SHRI PRANAB KUMAR MUKHERJEE : Sir at present there is no such scheme.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question No. 369, Shri Shivajirao Giridhar Patil.

SHRI SHIVAJIRAO GIRIDHAR PATIL : Sir, Question No. 369.

Sale of Edible Oil

@369. SHRI SHIVAJIRAO GIRIDHAR PATIL : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the edible oil is allowed to be marketed without 'AGMARK';

(b) whether it is also a fact that because of this many oil traders are indulging in adulteration of oil on a large scale and selling oil at cheaper rates thereby affecting the price level of edible oil produced under the scheme sponsored by NDDB;

(c) it so, the details of steps taken to stop this malpractices;

(d) whether it is a fact that prices of oil seeds have fallen which could cause diversion of oil seed farmers to other crops;

(e) whether it is also a fact that a Market Intervention Operation is not applicable to Sun Flower which is a very good oil seed but does not have the support price; and

(f) if so, what corrective measures Government proposed to undertake ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI A. K. ANTONY) : (a) to (c) Blended edible oils can be marketed only under Agmark. However, other liquid oil are required to conform to statutory requirements laid down under Prevention of Food Adulteration rules. Agmark is basically a voluntary scheme. There is no report from any State/UT Administrations to indicate any large scale adulteration of edible oil sold by private trade or private trade selling oil at any cheap rate.

(d) Prices of oilseeds and oils in the current year have declined. Cultivation of any crop depend on several factors besides the price of produce.

(e) and (f) Support price announced during 1992-93 for sunflower seeds is Rs. 800/- per quintal as against Rs. 670/- per quintal 1991-92—an increase of 19%. Sunflower is included under price support operation by NAFED. NAFED has made elaborate arrangement for procurement of oil seeds.

NDDB is the designated agency for Market Intervention Operation of oilseeds and oils. NDDB is marketing sunflower oil.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question Hour is over.

@Previously Starred Question 349, transferred from 19th March, 1993.